



# FORESTRY: ISSUES AND NEEDS IN KENTUCKY



Kentucky Environmental Quality Commission  
Public Forum  
May 30, 2002  
Morehead State University



## Forestry Issues and Needs In Kentucky: A Public Forum

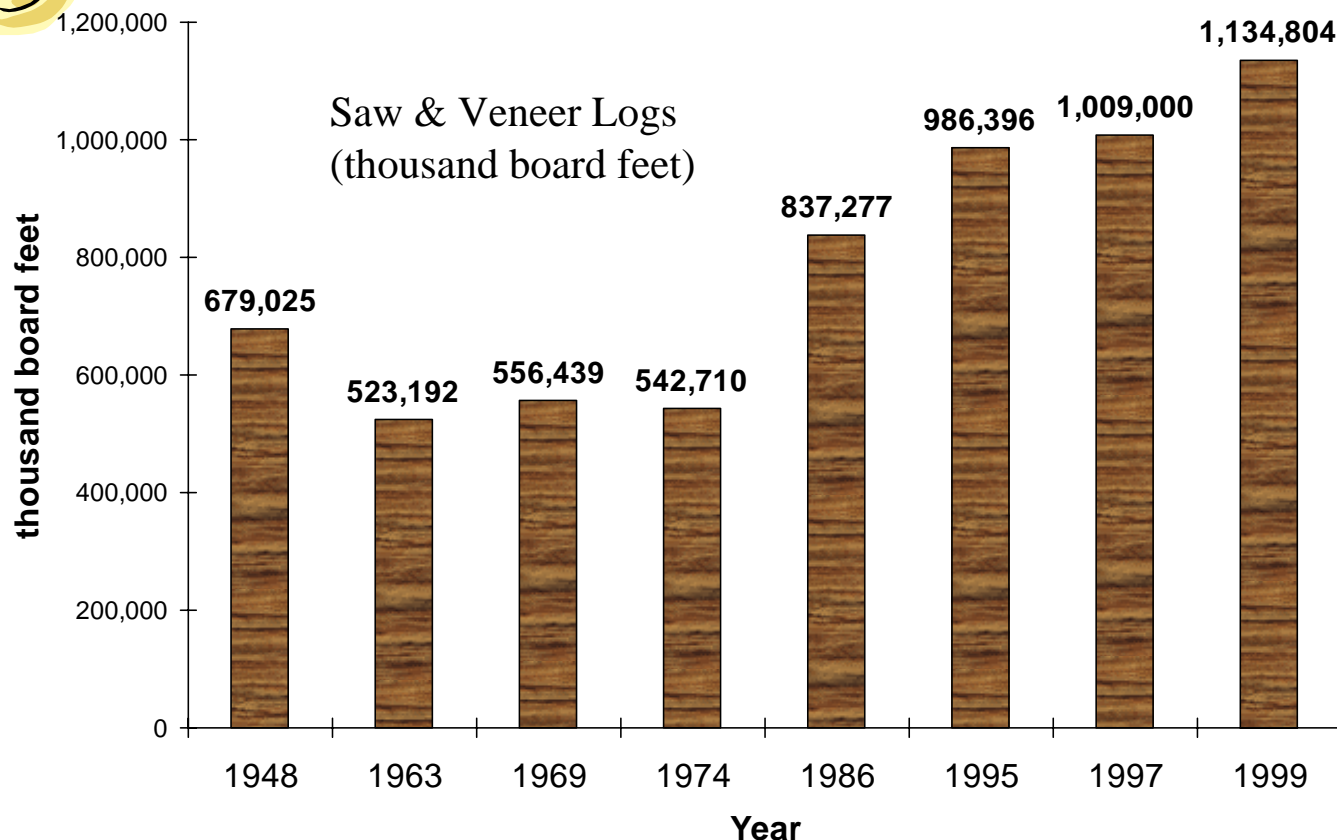


More than 100 people attended the EQC public forum on forestry issues and needs.

Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) Chair Aloma Dew opened the forestry forum at 6:30 p.m. Ms. Dew stated that over the years, Kentucky's forests have changed. Almost every forest in Kentucky has been logged at one time. Thousands of acres of forestlands have also been cleared to make way for farms, development, and roads. Today, forestland covers an estimated 46 to 48 percent of the state's 25.6 million acres of land. Some 306,900 private landowners own about 93 percent of the forestland in Kentucky with the average woodland tract being 38 acres.



## Forest Harvesting Trends in Kentucky



Source:  
U.S.  
Forest  
Service  
Timber  
Product  
Output  
and Use.  
Compiled  
by EQC.

Kentucky's forestlands help to form the state's distinctive biological diversity and contribute to our economic and environmental well-being. But Kentucky's forests face numerous challenges and issues. Private forests are being logged at record levels. Preliminary data reveals that in 1999, a record 1.13 billion board feet of timber was harvested from Kentucky's forests. That's a 12 percent increase since 1997 and double the harvesting levels reported in 1974. A forest survey, currently underway, should give us a better idea of the impacts of logging on the sustainability of Kentucky's forests.





## Forest Resource Threats in Kentucky



### Kentucky Wildfire Facts

Average # of wildfires a year . . .  
..... 1,447

Average acres of forests burned  
a year ..... 44,801

Fires attributed to arson . . . 53%

# of arson convictions (1999). ..3

Our forests have also been damaged by wildfires. Each year fires burn thousands of acres of forests. These fires not only threaten public safety they impair timber quality and destroy wildlife habitat. Most of these forest fires are purposely set. Unfortunately, very few arsonists are ever apprehended.

Kentucky's forests have also been impacted by disease and insects. One of the greatest threats at this time is the southern pine beetle which has killed thousands of acres of pine trees. Statewide there were over 1,500 infestations and 6 counties were in outbreak status. And proposed coal mining in the Daniel Boone National Forest has raised public concerns about its impacts to forestlands and tourism in Kentucky's only national forest.



## Daniel Boone National Forest



Daniel  
Boone  
National  
Forest.  
Photo by  
Dave  
Robinson

Ben Worthington, Forest Supervisor with the Daniel Boone National (DBNF) to reviewed issues facing the forest. Mr. Worthington said as of March 2001 it was estimated that 80% of the pine in the DBNF had been lost due to the southern pine beetle. The Gypsy moth also threatens the DBNF. The moth attacks oak trees and could be here in 10 to 15 years. Mr. Worthington also discussed the proposed 1-64 interchange in Morehead slated to go through the Daniel Boone National Forest. He indicated that the U.S. Forest Service is a cooperating agency for the project but the Ky. Department of Transportation is the final decision-maker. A review of coal mining in the DBNF followed. About 70 % of minerals in the DBNF are privately owned. Two recent proposals to mine federal reserves in the forest are under review.



## Private Forestlands



Haystack  
Rock,  
Red River  
Gorge.  
By Ken  
Kettering

Leah MacSwords, Director of the Kentucky Division of Forestry, presented seven key factors necessary to meet current forests needs without compromising the future of the forests.

- Landowner knowledge
- Land use planning
- Accurate data and information about the status and condition of our forests
- Preservation and conservation of certain forest lands
- Market demands
- Incentives for landowners and forest industries
- Forest protection

Ms. MacSwords said citizens, landowners, forest industries and governments must all work together to make sustainable forests our goal and manage accordingly.





## Forest Industry Perspective



Angel  
Windows,  
Red River  
Gorge  
By  
Beverly  
Jacquez

Bob Bauer, Director of the Kentucky Forest Industry Association emphasized that the key to sustainable forests is good management. In the future the forest industry will change from sawmills and loggers to dry kilns and lumber processing and making finished products. That's where the growth in the industry is coming. Mr. Bauer's forest concerns and needs included:

- Inventory of Kentucky's forests,
- Good information and getting that information out,
- Ensuring the multiple use of the Daniel Boone National Forest, and
- Forest incentives for landowners.



## Public Interest Group Perspective



Daniel  
Boone  
National  
Forest.  
Photo by  
Dave  
Robinson

Mr. Doug Doerrfeld, Chapter Representative for the Kentuckians for the Commonwealth defined sustainability as ecosystem-based communities; forest management that protects biodiversity, produces a constant supply of large diameter saw logs where the profits from these forest products remain in local communities. He noted that the small percentage of landowners with forest management plans must be increased. Property tax deductions for forest landowners could be used as an incentive to promote tree farms and other forest management organizations like the forest stewardship councils. Mr. Doerrfeld called for a statewide study to assess the cumulative effects of logging, sprawl, agriculture, and mining on flooding, water quality, forest sustainability, biodiversity and quality of life. With the goal being what is sustainable -- the highest rate of harvest in relation to a constant flow of large-diameter sawlogs is.





## Public Comment



Several audience members representing a local group called Smart Progress expressed concern about a proposed I-64 interchange in Morehead. The road is slated to go through the Daniel Boone National Forest.

Ben Worthington, Supervisor of the Daniel Boone National Forest responded that the U.S. Forest Service is not the decision-maker regarding this road project. What we do is provide input. We provide the Ky. Dept. of Transportation (DOT) with what we see the impacts to be, but it is up to them to take that into consideration and do the analysis. As a cooperating agency, I am not much more than a member of the public, stated Worthington. It is up to the DOT to inform the public. If you have questions, contact the federal highway administrator or the state DOT to get some answers, suggested Worthington.



## Public Comment



Chris Schimmoeller, a member of the public interest group Heartwood, expressed the need for Kentucky's forests to be analyzed from a scientific and ecological perspective. Assessing conditions and trends solely from a silvicultural point of view is insufficient. Forests hold a deeper and far more significant value standing than the price that the logs can fetch at the mill and we should turn to the ecologists, biologists and hydrologists for guidance, according to Schimmoeller.



## Public Comment



Bob Girton, a member of the Ky. Forestland Owners Association, commended the Ky. Division of Forestry for its efforts to implement the Forest Conservation Act but expressed concern about landowner education. He noted that the forest stewardship issue really hasn't been addressed adequately. According to Mr. Girton, Kentucky needs to promote stewardship for public and private forests under three strategies:

- Expand landowner education,
- Develop a tax structure that encourages long-term investment, and
- Develop a state-funded forest stewardship incentive program.

He urged the Ky. Division of Forestry to revisit the forest stewardship plan that is now 6 years old.





## Public Comment



Ray White, a mill owner in Morehead, gave his version of the view out the window of the forest landscape (first described by Aloma Dew as a beautiful forest). Mr. White's view was a forest that was severely damaged by sheer winds a few years ago, trees were blown down, and today a lot of that timber is laying on the ground and there is a lot of erosion. The day the storm winds hit, there was a lot of commercial value to that timber. But in the name of saving the Indiana bat, salvage was halted. After a year or so of litigation, permission was given for harvesting but the opportunity had passed. The commercial value of the timber was lost. His concern was the possibility of too much regulation. He also commented that studies have shown that a young trees clean the air better than a 100 to 200 year-old tree. The key is balance.



## Public Comment



Grant Curry, a member of the Society of American Foresters, urged EQC to look at trends and pay close attention especially to tree diameter distribution. Mr. Curry said that you can ask any forester and they will tell you unequivocally forests are sustainable.



A member of the audience said there are about 40 mine sites that have never been cleaned up which are leaching acids into the streams of the Daniel Boone National Forest. There should be no more mining in the forest until these sites are cleaned up.



## Public Comment



A number of other public concerns were expressed throughout the 3 1/2 hour forum. One audience member asked “How long do you think Kentucky can sustain the kind of harvesting being done at the present time and still have anything left in ten years?” Leah MacSwords, Director of the Ky. Division of Forestry, noted that sustainability will depend on cooperative efforts. She encouraged private citizens to work with industry and government and through their local legislators to help decide what sustainability means in your area. She said Kentuckians need to determine what is best for the Commonwealth. Bob Bauer, Director of the Ky. Forest Industry Assn. responded that he believed current harvesting levels were sustainable into the future.





## EQC Recommendations



After review of comments and issues, EQC passed three resolutions to be sent to Gov. Patton and other state and federal officials.

- [Forest Resources](#) - including recommendations supporting a “notice of intent to log” requirement, more timely data reporting on forest resources, full funding and implementation of the Forest Conservation Act and funding of a forest incentives program with tobacco settlement monies.
- [Mining of Federal Minerals on the Daniel Boone National Forest](#) - calling for a full environmental impact statement on two proposals to mine federal minerals on the forest
- [Daniel Boone National Forest Land Acquisition](#) - supporting Congressman Hal Rogers request of \$6.8 million to fund the 2003 Daniel Boone National Forest land acquisition program.